

Colonel Berndt's courageous actions in the former Yugoslavia were right in line with his character. He always told his parents he would not ask his men to do anything he would not do himself.

His decorations since he has joined the Marines in 1969 include the Defense Superior Service Medal, the Defense Meritorious Service Medal, the Navy Achievement Medal, the Meritorious Service Medal with two stars, the Combat Action Ribbon with one gold star, and the Joint Service Commendation Medal with a bronze oak leaf cluster.

After graduating from Springfield High School in 1965 and West Chester University in 1969, Colonel Berndt was commissioned a second lieutenant in the Marine Corps. He just came home 1 day and told his parents, "I have joined the Marines." His father said he is always very decisive, even as a child; quiet, active, and very decisive.

Throughout his brilliant 26-year military career, Berndt has served as a weapons platoon commander, a rifle platoon commander, a political military planner with the Office of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Middle East/Africa planner, the U.S. liaison to the West Africa Peacekeeping Force, and as well the Assistant Chief of Staff of Headquarters, commanding officer of the Third Battalion, Fourth Marines, and commanding officer of the First Battalion, Sixth Marines.

Berndt and his wife, Diana, have been married for 26 years, and have three children, Danielle, Martin, and Dennis, and they live on the U.S. Marine Corps Base in Camp Lejeune. Quite appropriately, Colonel Berndt is in line for promotion to brigadier general.

We salute tonight, Mr. Speaker, Col. Martin Berndt; a first class American leader, an outstanding Patriot, and a genuine military hero of the United States. God bless our men and women who fight for us every day in the Armed Forces of the United States to make sure that America is free. Semper Fi.

IMPORTANCE OF A BALANCED BUDGET

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. SMITH] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, a few minutes ago, roughly 28 minutes ago, the President of the United States made a nationally televised address indicating that he was now convinced that we should have a balanced budget. I wanted to give this 5 minutes tonight because I am delighted to welcome the President aboard, because he now realizes, or the pollsters realize, that a balanced budget is going to be very important if we are going to spur the economic and job development of this country, if we are going to be very important if we are going to spur the economic and job development of this country, if we are going to end up not

giving our kids and our grandkids a mortgaged future. Let me just make a couple of comments on how serious the overspending of this Congress is and what is happening to the obligation of future generations.

□ 2130

We now have a debt of approximately \$4.9 trillion. That means that the interest on that debt this year is going to be \$339 billion, the largest expense item of anything else on our budget. But the problem is of jobs and economic development. If we are not able to balance that budget, then we continue to obligate a greater and greater portion of our budget to the interest. But more than that, here is the Federal Government today going out and demanding that they have 42 percent of all of the money lent out in the United States this year. That means that extra demand for money is driving up interest rates.

Our top banker of this Nation, Chairman Greenspan of the Federal Reserve, estimates that if we are able to balance the budget, we can see interest rates drop between 1½ and 2 percent. What is that going to do for business? What is that going to do for people that want to go out and buy a new home or a new car or business to expand their operation and to hire more people? It is going to do a great deal.

The other problem, or course, is the U.S. needs to have the kind of tax policy that is going to spur economic development.

The President tonight said nothing to stimulate the economy through taxes, but he was for those good political things of a middle class tax cut. And so I am concerned that whether or not this was political rhetoric on the part of the President tonight is going to be shown really in his details as he presents those details to the United States Congress.

It is good news that we are all going to talk from the same goal of eventually achieving a balanced budget. The President suggests we should wait for 10 years to get that balanced budget. But this is a problem technically, because the problem of compounding interest, the longer we wait to cut some of those expenses, the more drastic those cuts are going to have to be. That is why it is important that we start early, that we try to get this balanced budget in 5 years. The House and the Senate have said, let us take 7 years to do it, but let us do it at least in 7 years and then start paying off the actual debt that we have incurred for future generations.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you for this opportunity.

Mr. President, welcome aboard in the legitimate budget discussions of having a true balanced budget and saving our future for our kids.

BALANCING THE BUDGET

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BARR). Under a previous order of the

House, the gentleman from Georgia [Mr. KINGSTON] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, I wanted to follow up on the comments of the gentleman from Michigan about the President making a speech tonight concerning balancing the budget.

I, too, welcome the President in this discussion. We have had a game, I guess since January, of where is Bill, and I am glad to see that he has emerged. I regret that it is after the House has passed its balanced budget. I regret that it is after the Senate has passed its balanced budget. But there is still time, and this is going to be many, many years and a very long process. So I am glad to see he has decided to go ahead and jump in the game at this point.

But I am concerned that now, after fighting against a middle-class tax cut, he has come out for one.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Arizona [Mr. HAYWORTH] on this matter because that is what I understand that he did notice; is that correct?

Mr. HAYWORTH. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Georgia, my good friend, for yielding to me.

I think it is very important, in the wake of the Presidential address, to go on the record as the new majority party at a historic moment in our history to say that we welcome the President, albeit better later than never, finally owning up to the task of leadership and perhaps reading the polls and seeing that the American public does, indeed, want its politicians, no matter their party affiliation, to work toward a balanced budget.

But even as we welcome the President's constructive move, I know my friend from Georgia will be surprised when he hears that the harshest criticism, according to the wires of the Associated Press, Mr. Speaker, the harshest criticism comes from the ranking House Democrat on appropriations. Let me quote what our friend, Mr. OBEY, the Democrat of Wisconsin says about the President and tonight's exercise.

I think most of us learned some time ago that if you don't like the President's position on a particular issue, you simply need to wait a few weeks.

Now, let me hasten, Mr. Speaker, and my good friend from Georgia, Mr. KINGSTON, to again reinforce the fact that the words are not ours. They come from the President's own side of the aisle. Indeed, those who bemoan the rise in partisanship and who continually talk of gridlock would do well to remember tonight that the harshest criticisms, again, comes from the President's own party, those defenders of the statute quo who have yet to meet a Government program they do not like, who have yet to meet a tax increase they do not like. And even as the President talks of tax cuts, again, he always qualifies those comments by talking of the middle class or the working class.